has been designated as the nodal agency for carrying out the tests of suspected Anthrax samples. A round the clock control room is functioning {(TelephoneNos. 3912901) (Between 10.00 A.M. to 6.00 P.M.) & 3971875 (Between 6.00 P.M. to 10.00 A.M.)} to receive and test the suspected samples. Till the evening of 27th November, 2001, 322 suspected envelopes were received in the NICD for testing. 303 samples have already been tested, none was found positive.

5. CD Alert, a monthly Newsletter of National Institute of Communicable Diseases titled "Bioterrorism-Public Health system to Remain Alert" exclusively on Anthrax has been widely circulated. It has also been put in the Website of MOHFW (http://mohfw.nic.in) for information of general public.
6. Do's & Don'ts has already been published in the leading National Dailies regarding Anthrax.
7. A meeting-cum workshop on Biological & Chemical Terrorism was convened by the Department of Health on 29th October, 2001, in New Delhi wherein Health Secretary, Home Secretary and Director of Health Services from various States/UTs., eminent experts in the field of medical science from different organizations in the country and heads of different hospitals in Government and private sector in Delhi participated and deliberated on various aspects. The representatives from the States informed the preparatory measures taken by them and assured availability of drugs in adequate quantity to tackle any situation.
8. Continuing Medical Education activities are being conducted in the Central Government hospitals in Delhi to sensitise the medical and paramedical personnel on biological terrorism.
9. The situation is being monitored.

Confirmation Tests for HIV

*199. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) which are the tests required to be conduced for confirmation of HIV;

(b) whether tests for HIV confirmation are different for children less than, two years;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether HIV testing machines are available in the Medical Colleges;

(e) whether these Colleges are authorised to announce the status of an AIDS victim; and

(f) if so, the number of cases detected till date?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) There are various tests available for confirmation of HIV based on the detection of antibodies and virus particles. These tests are : (I) Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assays [ELISA]; (2) Rapid HIV tests; (3) Western Blot [WB]; (4) Indirect fluorescent antibody test [IFA]; and (5) Polymerase Chain Reaction [PCR] for detecting virus particles.

Under the National AIDS Control Programme, ELISA and Rapid HIV Assays are being used for diagnosis of HIV infected persons, asymptomatic HIV persons and epidemiological surveillance.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The HIV status of children below the age of 2 years can be detected by a test known as Polymerase Chain reaction. Children have passive antibodies from HIV infected mothers which may not reveal the true HIV status of the child. These antibodies disappear around 18 months of age when sero conversion takes place. Thereafter, HIV can be detected by conventional tests.

(d) to (f) Yes, Sir. In children below 18 months of age, it is advised to conduct PCR test to detect the HIV particles. HIV testing machines, for detecting antibodies *i.e.* ELISA readers are available in a majority of Public Sector Medical Colleges; the machines for conducting the polymerase Chain Reaction [PCR] test are available at a few centers only, and are not recommended for routine diagnostic use. The Medical Colleges are authorized to reveal the status to the HIV/AIDS victim only, after pre and post test counseling, and maintaining full confidentiality. The cumulative number of AIDS cases, including children, reported till 31st October, 2001 is 29007.

Reasons for Heart Diseases

†*200. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indians are more prone to heart diseases in comparison to those in other countries;

(b) whether it is also a fact that most of the people consider smoking, high blood pressure, non- vegetarian food and changing life-style as a major factor for the heart diseases; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.